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FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TOHAK47//

TO DAVE GOMPERT FOR THE SECRETARY

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APRIL 7, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: THE SITUATION ROOM

SUBJECT: EVENING NOTES

ARMY, NSA Review Completed.

OIL CONFERENCE: REUTER REPORTS THE FIRST DIALOGUE BETWEEN MAJOR OIL CONSUMING AND PRODUCING NATIONS OPENED IN PARIS TODAY WITH AN APPEAL FOR CONCILIATION BUT WITH TROUBLE BREWING BENEATH THE SURFACE BECAUSE OF THE TOUGHENED U.S. ATTITUDE. AT A BRIEF OPENING SESSION, CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN LOUIS DE GUIRINGAUD OF FRANCE TOLD DELEGATES: "WE ARE TODAY LAUNCHING A PROCESS WHICH SHOULD LEAD TO ESTABLISHING NEW RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON EQUALITY AND IN WHICH CONFRONTATION SHOULD BE SET ASIDE." HE ASKED THE CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS NOT TO BLAME EACH OTHER FOR THE WORLD ECONOMIC DISARRAY RESULTING FROM THE OIL CRISIS THAT BEGAN 18 MONTHS AGO. DESPITE THIS HARMONIOUS NOTE, THE PROSPECTS FOR AVOIDING TROUBLE APPEARED TO BE DIMINISHED BY A NEWLY COMBATIVE AMERICAN STAND.

THE WASHINGTON-STAR NEWS

VERNON GUIDRY WRITES THAT WITH MANY PREDICTING THE IMMINENT FALL OF SOUTH VIETNAM TO COMMUNIST FORCES, SECRETARY SCHLESINGER HAS SUGGESTED THAT A COMMUNIST VICTORY WILL NOT NECESSARILY TRIGGER THE INTERNATIONAL DOUBTS OF U.S. COMMITMENTS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS SO PUBLICLY FEARED.

MARY MCGRORY IN A POINT OF VIEW SAYS THAT AS IT REQUIRED IN THE BEGINNING, THE VIETNAM WAR REQUIRES AT ITS END THE COURAGE OF AMERICA TO DO NOTHING. TO DO NOTHING GOES AGAINST THE GRAIN OF AMERICA. THE INFORMING PRINCIPAL OF OUR PARTICIPATION HAS BEEN THAT IT IS BETTER TO DO ANYTHING THAN TO DO NOTHING. WHAT GERALD FORD SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR, INSTEAD OF EXCUSES TO PERSIST, IS THE WORDS TO EXPLAIN TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHAT HAS HAPPENED. HE SHOULD BE SEARCHING FOR THOSE GRAVE AND SOMBRE TERMS TO DEFINE FAILURE SO ITS LESSONS MIGHT BE LEARNED.

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GARRY WILLS WRITES THAT TV IS HARD TO TAKE THESE NIGHTS. WE SEE DEAD CHILDREN, FIGHTING MEN, WEEPING MOTHERS. THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO OBVIOUSLY CARE VERY MUCH ABOUT LIFE, AND IT IS BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM. THE END IS SICKENING. BUT WE CAN ONLY PUT IT OFF BY A PROLONGATION, NOT EVASION. THE GOVERNMENT WE PROPPED UP SO LONG IS COLLAPSING AS IT WOULD HAVE LONG AGO WITHOUT OUR ARTIFICIAL INJECTIONS OF AID. IN AMERICA, OUR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ADMITS, FOR THE THOUSANDTH TIME, THAT OUR ESTIMATES WERE WRONG. OUR VICE PRESIDENT SHOCKS YOU BY ADMITTING THE OBVIOUS, THAT SAIGON IS FINISHED. YOU WORRY ABOUT YOUR REPUTATION; AND EX-PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON WRITES FROM EXILE, TELLING OLD FRIENDS TO RALLY 'ROUND YOU. WE ARE TOLD THAT IT IS "SAVAGE" TO CRITICIZE THE MAN WHO BROUGHT US PEACE -- WHILE THAT PEACE GOES ON SLAYING IN INDOCHINA, RUNNING DOWN IN A Mired SWAMP OF BLOOD. WHO LOST CAMBODIA? WHO LOST VIETNAM? WE DID, AND THEY WEREN'T EVEN OURS TO LOSE. WE HAD TO CREATE OUR PUPPETS BEFORE THE PUPPETS COULD BE SMASHED. WE HAD TO FEEL THAT ORIENTAL LIFE WAS CHEAP. WE HAD TO DESTROY VILLAGE AFTER VILLAGE IN ORDER TO SAVE IT. AND NOW, TO SAVE TWO COUNTRIES, WE HAVE DEVASTATED THEM. WE HAVE MADE OUR WILDERNESS, AND CALLED IT "PEACE WITH HONOR."

A STAR EDITORIAL SAYS THAT IN THE COURSE OF HIS RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE AND IN A NUMBER OF PUBLIC SPEECHES, PRESIDENT FORD HAS DRAWN ATTENTION TO THE GREATEST DANGER, FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE U.S., IN THE COLLAPSE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. IT IS, QUITE SIMPLY, THAT COUNTRIES HOSTILE TO THE U.S. WILL TAKE THESE MAJOR REVERSALS AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS IN THE COUNTRY -- A WEAKNESS WHICH THEY MAY BE TEMPTED TO TRY TO EXPLOIT. IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER THINGS THAT FORD HAS SAID LATELY, HIS CERTAINTY ABOUT AMERICAN RESPONSES IS NOT ALL IT MIGHT BE. HIS CHARGE THAT CONGRESS BEARS A MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED THERE SERVES TO EMPHASIZE THE CURRENT WEAKNESS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. IN ANY EVENT, AT LEAST SOME OF OUR ALLIES AND TIME-TESTED FRIENDS HAVE BEEN SHOWING DISTINCT SIGNS OF WORRY LATELY. THE ISRAELIS, WHO ARE LIKELY TO BE AMONG THE FIRST TO TEST THE CONTINUING AMERICAN RESOLVE, SHOW LITTLE INCLINATION TO TRUST THEMSELVES TO VERBAL PROMISES OF SUPPORT. MORE RECENTLY, THE JAPANESE HAVE ALSO JOINED THE GROUP OF DOUBTING FRIENDS. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER MIYAZAWA WILL SEEK A REAFFIRMATION OF THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN THE "NUCLEAR UMBRELLA" WHEN HE MEETS WITH YOU IN A FEW DAYS. THIS MAY BE ILL-ADVISED. TO RESUBMIT THE QUESTION OF JAPANESE SECURITY TO THE CONGRESS AT THIS STAGE WOULD BE TO RUN A QUITE UNNECESSARY RISK. PERHAPS THE RISK OF CONFIRMING THE MISGIVINGS OUR MOST IMPORTANT ALLIES ARE EXPERIENCING.

VIETNAM

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ACTION IN THE DELTA: MOST OF THE MILITARY ~~REMAINING IN~~
~~THE DELTA~~. THE COMMUNISTS BEGAN THEIR ASSAULT ON THE MOC HOA
 FRONT EARLY TODAY WITH A MIXED BARRAGE OF SOME 1,000 ROCKET,
 ARTILLERY, AND MORTAR ROUNDS AGAINST A GOVERNMENT POSITION LESS
 THAN EIGHT MILES NORTHEAST OF THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL. COM-
 MUNIST-INITIATED ACTIVITY IS ALSO GROWING IN OTHER PARTS OF
 THE DELTA, PARTICULARLY IN DINH TUONG PROVINCE WHERE THERE WERE
 A NUMBER OF SHELLINGS AND A DOZEN GROUND ATTACKS YESTERDAY.

GOVERNMENT SITUATION IN MR-2: THE MR-3 COMMANDER LT. GEN. TOAN,
 WHO IS NOW RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FEW REMAINING GOVERNMENT ENCLAVES
 IN MR-2, MADE A TRIP TO THESE AREAS OVER THE WEEKEND AND HAS
 TAKEN A NUMBER OF STEPS TO SHORE UP THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION
 THERE. HIS FIRST MOVE WAS TO SET UP A FORWARD COMMAND HEAD-
 QUARTERS AT PHAN RANG IN NINH THUAN PROVINCE UNDER THE COMMAND
 OF LT. GEN. NGUYEN VINH NGHI, THE PRESENT COMMANDER OF THE TU
 DUC OFFICERS ACADEMY. NGHI WILL COMMAND THE AIRBORNE BATTALION
 SENT THERE LAST WEEKEND, AND HE WILL SHORTLY HAVE A REGROUPED
 REGIMENT FROM THE 2ND DIVISION. GENERAL TOAN FOUND THAT MOST
 OF THE GOVERNMENT'S TERRITORIAL FORCES ARE STILL IN PLACE AROUND
 THE PHAN RANG AREA. TOAN IS CHECKING THE SITUATION NORTH OF
 PHAN RANG AND MAY CONSIDER MOVING FORCES THERE IF HE CAN COM-
 PLETE HIS REORGANIZATION OF MR-2 FORCES RAPIDLY ENOUGH, AND IF
 THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT MOVE IN FIRST. SOME GOVERNMENT NAVAL
 UNITS HAVE MOVED INTO THE NHA TRANG AREA AND ARE REPORTED TO
 BE HOLDING POSITIONS AT THE PORT AND AT THE AIRFIELD.

GOVERNMENT FORCES REGROUPING: THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO REAS-
 SEMBLE ITS SHATTERED FORCES FROM MRS 1 AND 2. THE MR-3 COMMANDER
 CLAIMS HE IS SATISFIED THAT ALL RETURNING GOVERNMENT UNITS AND
 STRAGGLERS WHO HAVE COME TO BINH TUY PROVINCE BY BOAT OR ROAD ARE
 UNDER CONTROL AND THAT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE REORGANIZING THEM
 INTO USABLE MILITARY UNITS. IN ADDITION TO THE MARINES AND 2ND
 DIVISION TROOPS THAT ARE REGROUPING, OVER 7,000 OFFICERS AND MEN
 OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE 22ND DIVISION -- PERHAPS A HALF OF THAT
 UNITS' FORMER STRENGTH -- HAVE REACHED VUNG TAU. IT IS EXPECTED
 THAT THESE TROOPS WILL BE THE BASIS FOR A NEWLY ORGANIZED 22ND
 DIVISION. PROGRESS HAS BEEN ALSO MADE IN REORGANIZING THE 2ND
 DIVISION AND ONE REGIMENT IS SCHEDULED TO BE SENT TO PHAN RANG
 TOMORROW.

312TH DIVISION MOVING SOUTH: HANOI IS SENDING ANOTHER OF ITS
 THREE REMAINING RESERVE DIVISIONS TO SOUTH VIETNAM. ACCORDING
 TO RADIO-DIRECTION FINDING OF APRIL 7, THE 312TH DIVISION HEAD-
 QUARTERS HAS SHIFTED TO A POSITION NEAR THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE
 FROM ITS FORMER GARRISON IN THE THANH HOA AREA OF NORTH VIETNAM.

NSA does not require
 protection of this
 information.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION: A CONSENSUS IS EMERGING AMONG A
 NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAS BOTH
 THE SUPPORT AND THE POLITICAL SAVVY TO FEND OFF DEMANDS THAT

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HE STEP DOWN. FORMER PRIME MINISTER KHIEM REVEALED IN A RECENT CONVERSATION THAT HE SEES NO VIETNAMESE INFLUENCE STRONG ENOUGH TO PERSUADE THIEU TO STEP ASIDE OR FORCE HIS RESIGNATION; LESSER OFFICIALS ALSO HAVE BEGUN TO CONCUR WITH HIS ASSESSMENT. THIS APPARENT ATTITUDE OF RESIGNATION HAS NOT LESSENED THE DISSATISFACTION WITH THIEU'S RECENT DECISIONS AND PROBABLY WILL DO LITTLE TO TEMPER CRITICISM OF HIM PERSONALLY. BUT IT IS LIKELY TO LEAD TO GRUDGING ACCEPTANCE OF THIEU'S CONTINUATION IN OFFICE FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. IN ANOTHER CONVERSATION FRIDAY WITH ROVING AMBASSADOR TRAN VAN DON, THIEU SAID THAT HE HAD NO INTENTIONS OF STEPPING DOWN. THIEU TOLD DON THAT KHIEM HAD TO BE REMOVED SINCE IN HIS ROLE AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE, KHIEM HAD THE "ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY" FOR THE "SAD PERFORMANCE" OF THE ARMED FORCES IN MILITARY REGIONS 1 AND 2. THE PRESIDENT REVEALED THAT HE WANTS THE NEW CABINET TO BE ORGANIZED INTO FOUR SEPARATE "BLOCKS": FOR MILITARY AFFAIRS, REFUGEE ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, AND POLITICAL ACTION. THIEU IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD ONLY PROVIDE OVERALL GUIDANCE AND WOULD LEAVE DAY-TO-DAY DECISIONS TO HIS MINISTERS.

CAMBODIA

THE TACTICAL SITUATION: KHMER COMMUNIST GROUND ATTACKS LAST NIGHT FORCED FURTHER GOVERNMENT WITHDRAWALS FROM NORTH OF POCHENTONG AIRPORT. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NOT MOVED IN FORCE TO EXPLOIT THE NEW GAPS IN GOVERNMENT DEFENSES DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS TODAY BUT SOME INSURGENT ELEMENTS ARE REPORTEDLY WITHIN THREE MILES OF THE AIRPORT. DEFENSE ATTACHES VISITED THIS FRONT TODAY AND REPORTED THAT GOVERNMENT COMMANDERS ARE DOING VERY LITTLE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION AND THAT SOME COMMANDERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT "THE END IS NEAR." OVER 30 ROCKETS AND ARTILLERY ROUNDS LANDED NEAR THE AIRFIELD TODAY DAMAGING TWO AIRCRAFT AND SETTING A SMALL AMMUNITION DUMP ON FIRE. GOVERNMENT TROOPS ON THE MEKONG RIVER NORTHEAST OF THE CAPITAL REPORT THAT COMMUNIST TROOPS ARE CROSSING THE RIVER AND MAY SOON BEGIN PUSHING SOUTH TOWARD THE MAIN NAVY HEADQUARTERS. THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE COULD BEGIN UNRAVELING WITH LITTLE WARNING IN THE NEAR FUTURE. ALTHOUGH SEVERAL PROVINCIAL COMMANDERS HAVE CLAIMED THAT THEIR TROOPS WOULD CONTINUE FIGHTING EVEN IF PHNOM PENH FALLS, AIRDROPS TO ALL ISOLATED ENCLAVES WILL HAVE HALTED BY APRIL 17 WHEN PARACHUTES AND PALLETS ARE EXHAUSTED. A RECENT INTERCEPTED MESSAGE FROM A COMMUNIST UNIT NEAR THE NORTHERN PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF KOMPONG CHAM, IN FACT, INDICATES THAT GOVERNMENT UNITS THERE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF A SURRENDER WITH LOCAL COMMUNIST FORCES.

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